
**Introduced by Senator Wright
(Principal coauthor: Senator Price)**

(Coauthors: Assembly Members Bradford, Brown, Hall, Holden,
Jones-Sawyer, Mitchell, and Weber)

January 28, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 9—Relative to Black History Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 9, as introduced, Wright. Black History Month.

This measure would recognize February 2013 as Black History Month, urge all residents to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African Americans during Black History Month, and encourage the people of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and contributions that African Americans make to their communities.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson, distinguished African
2 American author, editor, publisher, and historian, who is known
3 as the “Father of Black History,” founded Negro History Week in
4 1926, which became Black History Month in 1976, intended to
5 encourage further research and publishing regarding the untold
6 stories of African American heritage; and
7 WHEREAS, The history of African Americans here in the
8 United States, as well as throughout the ages, is indeed unique and
9 vibrant, and it is appropriate to celebrate this history during the
10 month of February 2013, which has been proclaimed as Black
11 History Month; and

1 WHEREAS, There is even greater cause for a reverent
2 celebration in 2013 as Americans reflect on the significance of the
3 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the 50th
4 anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,
5 and the 50th anniversary of the death of civil rights leader Medgar
6 Evers; and

7 WHEREAS, The history of the United States is rich with
8 inspirational stories of great men and noble women whose actions,
9 words, and achievements have united Americans and contributed
10 to the success and prosperity of the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, During the first millennium, the Catholic Church
12 had three popes who were either from Africa or of African descent:
13 Saint Victor I (189–99), Saint Miltiades (311–14), and Saint
14 Gelasius I (492–96); and

15 WHEREAS, The slave trade was a tragic episode in African
16 history and began before August 1619 when the first slaves arrived
17 in Jamestown, Virginia. During the course of the slave trade, an
18 estimated 50 million African men, women, and children were lost
19 to their native continent, though only about 15 million arrived
20 safely to a new home. The others lost their lives on African soil
21 or along the Guinea coast, or finally in holds on the ships during
22 the dreaded Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean; and

23 WHEREAS, The first American to shed blood in the revolution
24 that freed America from British rule was Crispus Attucks (March
25 5, 1770, Boston Massacre), an African American seaman and slave.
26 African Americans also fought in wars including the Battles of
27 Lexington and Concord in April 1775, Ticonderoga, White Plains,
28 Bennington, Brandywine, Saratoga, Savannah, Yorktown, Bunker
29 Hill, the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1775, and other
30 revolutionary war battles, the War of 1812, including, the Battle
31 of New Orleans, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World
32 Wars I and II, Korea, and Vietnam; and

33 WHEREAS, In spite of the African slave trade, many Africans
34 and African Americans continued to move forward in society;
35 during the Reconstruction period, two African Americans served
36 in the United States Senate and 14 sat in the House of
37 Representatives; and

38 WHEREAS, From the earliest days of the United States, the
39 course of its history has been greatly influenced by Black heroes
40 and pioneers in many diverse areas, from science, medicine,

1 business, and education to government, industry, and social
2 leadership; and

3 WHEREAS, Although the institutions of slavery and racial
4 segregation forced early African American culture to develop
5 independently of mainstream American culture, today African
6 American culture has become a significant part of this country's
7 culture. African American culture has made prevalent contributions
8 to American culture ranging from music, dance, clothing and
9 hairstyle fashions, cuisine, and holiday observances; and

10 WHEREAS, African American art has made vital contributions
11 to the art history of the United States. During the colonial era and
12 the early 1800s, African American art took the form of small
13 drums, quilts, wrought-iron figures, wood carvings, and ceramic
14 vessels. Soon thereafter, the earliest African American portrait
15 artists started to emerge, including G.W. Hobbs, William Simpson,
16 Robert M. Douglas Jr., Patrick Henry Reason, Joshua Johnson,
17 Robert S. Duncanson, and Scipio Moorhead; and

18 WHEREAS, In the post-Civil War period, African American
19 artists received increased recognition as it became more acceptable
20 to display African American art in museums and other art venues.
21 Major artists of the era include Edward Mitchell Bannister, Henry
22 Ossawa Tanner, and Edmonia Lewis; and

23 WHEREAS, The increased exposure of African American art
24 ultimately resulted in the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s,
25 which was the first major public recognition of African American
26 art and produced notable artists including, Richmond Barthe, Aaron
27 Douglas, Lawrence Harris, Palmer Hayden, William H. Johnson,
28 Sargent Johnson, John Biggers, Earle Wilton Richardson, Malvin
29 Gray Johnson, Archibald Motley, Augusta Savage, Hale Woodruff,
30 and James Van Der Zee. This era also introduced African American
31 authors and poets, including W.E.B. Du Bois, Booker T.
32 Washington, Zora Neale Hurston, Nella Larsen, Langston Hughes,
33 Claude McKay, and Countee Cullen; and

34 WHEREAS, African American artists continued to influence
35 art in this country during the Civil Rights era. Major artists of the
36 era include Horace Pippin, Romare Bearden, Jacob Lawrence,
37 William T. Williams, Norman Lewis, and Sam Gilliam who were
38 all successfully received in galleries, and authors Richard Wright,
39 James Baldwin, and Gwendolyn Brooks wrote about the African
40 American experience; and

1 WHEREAS, African American art and culture have not only
2 been incorporated and recognized in mainstream American art
3 museums, but most major cities have opened museums dedicated
4 specifically to African American art and artists. The National
5 Endowment for the Arts is also providing increased support for
6 African American artists; and

7 WHEREAS, Africans and African Americans have also been
8 great inventors, inventing and improving things such as the
9 air-conditioning unit, almanac, automatic gearshift, blood plasma
10 bag, clothes dryer, doorknob, doorstop, electric lamp bulb, elevator,
11 fire escape ladder, fountain pen, gas mask, golf tee, horseshoe,
12 lantern, lawnmower, lawn sprinkler, lock, lubricating cup,
13 refrigerating apparatus, spark plug, stethoscope, telephone
14 transmitter, thermostat control, traffic signal, and typewriter; and

15 WHEREAS, A number of these brave and accomplished
16 individuals, such as Booker T. Washington, George Washington
17 Carver, Matthew Hansen, Daniel Hale Williams, Dr. Charles Drew,
18 Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Curt Flood, Medgar Evers, and,
19 of course, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are noted prominently in
20 the history books of students nationwide, thus enabling them to
21 learn about the important and lasting contributions of these
22 individuals; and

23 WHEREAS, Among those Americans who have enriched our
24 society are the members of the African American
25 community—individuals who have been steadfast in their
26 commitment to promoting brotherhood, equality, and justice for
27 all; now, therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
29 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature takes great pleasure in
30 recognizing February 2013 as Black History Month, urges all
31 residents to join in celebrating the accomplishments of African
32 Americans during Black History Month, and encourages the people
33 of California to recognize the many talents, achievements, and
34 contributions that African Americans make to their communities;
35 and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
37 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

O